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Message Text

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14
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

USSS-00 INRE-00 NSAE-00 /031 W
---------- 036939
O P 201205Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO USINT CAIRO IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0669
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 1353

EXDIS

TAGS: AEMR
SUBJECT: E AND E PLANNING
REF: CAIRO 3186

1. IF IT COMES TO EVACUATING LARGE NUMBER OF AMCITS FROM CAIRO TO BENGHAZI FOR TRANSIT TO EUROPE, ASSUME YOU WOULD FIRST EXHAUST ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR DOING SO BY AIR. THIS WOULD SAVE CONSIDERABLE HARDSHIP AND MUCH CONFUSION.

2. IF GOING BY SURFACE CAIRO-BENGHAZI IS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, IT IS NEVERTHELESS SAFE IN LIBYA AS WELL AS FEASIBLE. SOME AMERICANS AND OTHERS ARRIVED BENGHAZI THIS WEEK BY CAIRO TAXIS. THIS IS SECOND BEST WAY, AS IT AVOIDS SOME DELAY.

3. THIRD AND MOST LIKELY MEANS FOR BULK MOVEMENT IS BY BUS. SPECIAL PROBLEMS WITH THIS METHOD ARE ADMINISTRATIVE DELAYS, E.G. BAGGAGE BEING PUT ON ANOTHER BUS WHICH GETS SEPARATED FROM THE OWNERS' BUS, AND ALL THE USUAL DELAYS OF GROUP TRAVEL.

4. CAIRO-BENGHAZI BY ROAD SEEMS TO TAKE 24 TO 36 HOURS
SECRET

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UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, DUE TO ROAD CHECKS IN EGYPT AND PASSPORT/CUSTOMS CHECKS AT BORDER WITH ALL THE USUAL FORMS TO BE FILLED OUT. WHEN WE HEARD ONE BUS HELD AT BORDER FIVE HOURS FOR THIS BUSINESS WE COMPLAINED TO MFA. REPLY WAS THAT

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EVEN LIBYAN CITIZENS BEING HELD UP FOR LONGER PERIODS.
WE WOULD TRY AGAIN TO GET PROCEDURES STREAMLINED, BUT CANNOT
BE SANGUINE. THESE TRAVELERS SHOULD BE ADVISED TO TAKE A
LITTLE FOOD AND WATER WITH THEM FOR A TIRING TRIP OF UP TO
36 HOURS OF RIDING, WAITING, AND STANDING AROUND. OTHER ADVICE:
DO NOT EXPECT EGYPTIAN MONEY TO BUY ANYTHING IN LIBYA,
EVEN EGYPTAIR TICKETS; BRING HARD CURRENCY OR TRAVELERS
CHECKS PREFERRABLY. BASIC ONE-WAY FARE BENGHAZI-ROME IS
$68 AT THIS TIME. OVERNIGHTING AT A BENGHAZI HOTEL MAY BE
NECESSARY AND THE BASIC CHARGE FOR A DOUBLE ROOM IS ABOUT
$20. A SQUARE MEAL COSTS $3.50 TO $6.00.

5. HOTEL SPACE AT BENGHAZI HAS NOT BEEN OVERTAXED BY
FLOW OF SEVERAL HUNDRED PERSONS PER DAY THIS WEEK OF
VARIOUS NATIONALITIES OF TOURISTS. NEITHER HAS OUTBOUND
AIR TRANSPORTATION BEEN A BASIC PROBLEM. BOTH OF THESE
POSSIBLE BOTTLENECKS WOULD DEVELOP ONLY IF MANY OTHER
EXPATRIATES IN EGYPT, BESIDES AMERICANS, TIRED TO USE THE
SAME ROUTE. HOWEVER, UNDERSTAND ALITALIA AS WELL AS EGYPTAIR
PREPARED TO LAY ON ADDITIONAL PLANES AS NECESSARY FOR TRAVEL
TO ROME, AND DOUBT IF MORE THAN FEW HUNDRED EVACUEES WOULD
GET THROUGH THE BORDER BOTTLENECK PER DAY ANYWAY. RECOMMEND
AGAINST CHARTERING AIRCRAFT FOR AMCITS ONLY, AND ESPECIALLY
AGAINST CHARTERING AN AMERICAN AIRLINE.

6. REPLIES TO SOME OF YOUR OTHER QUESTIONS: UNLESS WE CAN GET
MFA TO WAIVE VISA REQUIREMENT (DOUBTFUL) VISAS ARE SUPPOSEDLY
NECESSARY. SAME APPLIES TO ARABIC STAMP IN PASSPORTS,
THOUGH WE WILL TRY AGAIN WHEN THE TIME COMES. HAVE NO
REPORT OF ANY AMERICAN BEING TURNED BACK AT BORDER FOR LACK OF
STAMPED PASSPORTS. THERE NO ENTRY TAXES. THE AIRPORT
EXIT FEE IS $1.70. TRAVELERS SHOULD OF COURSE BE ADVISED
NOT TO TRY BRING ANY LIQUOR INTO LIBYA.

7. EMBASSY WOULD PROVIDE TEAM AT BENGHAZI THAT I BELIEVE
WOULD BE ADEQUATE, ON BASIS RECENT EXPERIENCE, TO COPE
WITH FLOW OF AMCITS. TEAM WOULD NOT INCLUDE AN OFFICER BUT AN
SECRET

AMERICAN EMPLOYEE AND TWO OR MORE LOCAL EMPLOYEES.

8. MAY HAVE MORE COMMENTS LATER, BUT THIS ROUTE IS
FEASIBLE SO LONG AS LARG ATTITUDE REMAINS AS IS. WILL
REPORT ANY MAJOR CHANGE OF ATMOSPHERICS THAT QUARTER.
JOSIF

SECRET

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